

UNATTENDED CHILD POLICY

Adopted by the Library Board of Control – September 25th, 2023

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the well-being of the children in our community and to describe the responsibilities of parents, legal guardians, and designated caregivers, hereafter noted simply as "parents," regarding children's use of the West Feliciana Parish Library.

DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE

The library is for residents of all ages, and staff are available to help children discover and use library resources. Staff cannot, however, assume responsibility for unattended children or monitor if they leave the building. Parents are solely responsible for the behavior, safety, and supervision of their children on Library premises and for materials reviewed by children under their care.

For the purposes of this policy:

A **child** is any patron under the age of eighteen.

A **caregiver** must be at least 16 years of age, must be able to respond appropriately to an emergency, and must be in possession of appropriate emergency contact information.

POLICY

I. CHILDREN ELEVEN (11) OR YOUNGER

Children aged eleven and younger **may not** use the Library unattended and should be within the eyesight of the parent. It is the responsibility of the parent that the child follows the *Behavior Policy*.

II. CHILDREN TWELVE (12) AND OLDER

Children aged twelve and older **may** use the Library on their own providing they follow the Behavior Policy and are in possession of emergency contact information, as it is sometimes necessary for libraries to close due to unusual/emergency situations or weather concerns.

III. STAFF RESPONSE

If it comes to the attention of Library staff that:

- A child (11 or younger) is unattended
- A child of any age appears in distress
- A child of any age is alone, waiting on a ride, at closing time

Staff shall make a reasonable effort to locate the parents in the library or by phone. If parents cannot be reached or are unresponsive, the library may work with other local agencies, including law enforcement, to ensure the safety of the child. Such situations will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Under no circumstances will staff transport unattended children.

In any situation involving the safety of children, and specifically whenever the parent/caregiver or police are contacted, staff will complete an Incident Report.